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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 1267

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000242

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR: JROSHOLT, WHA/PDA: CWEST

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: ATTACKING CORRUPTION LITE: SENTENCES IN SURINAME POSITIVE,
BUT TOO SHORT

REF: a) PARAMARIBO 222

b) PARAMARIBO 470

c) PARAMARIBO 444

1. (U) SUMMARY. On May 13, a Surinamese judge handed down seven sentences in a much talked about corruption case (refs B, C) involving the Ministry of Finance. The convicted officials were charged with the embezzlement of 6,118,379 Surinamese Dollars (approximately U.S. \$2.1 million), participation in a criminal organization, and fraud. The sentences continue the government's trend of taking action against corrupt officials (reftels), but some observers consider the sentences too light. END SUMMARY.

Offence and Sentencing Details

2. (U) On May 13, seven officials from the Ministry of Finance were sentenced for manipulating payment vouchers after payment was authorized by the Ministry of Education. The two main suspects in this case, Remilio Kemper and Rawin Badloe, were both sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment and received additional fines of 100,000 SRD (approximately U.S. \$36,000) each. Four others (Ghansjaam Mohan, Ashwien Karaya, Vishnoekoemar Binasrie, and Rasjinderkoemar Ramsamoedj) were sentenced to nine months and additional fines of 50,000 SRD (approximately U.S. \$18,000). Marciano Symor (not considered by the judge to be part of the criminal ring, but characterized as a facilitator) was sentenced to five months imprisonment. Furthermore, the judge ordered that all defendants repay the government for the stolen funds.

Context and Comment: How Strong of a Deterrent?

3. (SBU) COMMENT. This is the third corruption case since the current cabinet took office in 2005. The first case, which involved 20 suspects at the Ministry of Public Works including then-Minister Dewanand Balesar, has been ongoing since 2005. The second case, also from 2005, resulted in the convictions of the Deputy Director and two civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries. At the conclusion of this third case, the media reported many in the courtroom expressed dismay at the lenient sentences. Meanwhile, anti-corruption legislation is still being debated by Suriname's parliament, accompanied by rumors that parliamentarians would prefer that it not pass because they fear prosecution themselves (ref B). Post finds these rumors credible, and will continue to follow the unfolding saga of small-scale official corruption in Suriname. END COMMENT

SCHREIBER HUGHES